

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 -21 (Canceled).

22. (New) A computer-based corporate rating system, wherein a communication terminal of a corporate rating business entity engaging in a business of performing corporate ratings having said communication terminal, a communication terminal of one or a plurality of target enterprises each having said communication terminal and each having a prescribed contractual relationship with said corporate rating business entity and desiring a corporate rating of itself, a communication terminal of an accounting firm having said communication terminal and having a prescribed contractual relationship with an application service provider (ASP) and each one of said plurality of target enterprises, an ASP server of said ASP having a prescribed contractual relationship with said corporate rating business entity, said each one of said target enterprises, and said accounting firm, are mutually electrically connected via an appropriate communication circuit,

wherein said ASP comprises storage means for storing business information indicating general business activities of each one of said target enterprises, including at least financial, accounting, and tax information for each one of said target enterprises, separately, into one of a specific areas of said storage means provided in said ASP and allocated to each one of said target enterprises, separately,

and further wherein said system comprises functions, each being performed by a respective computer that executes computer-readable program code stored on computer-readable medium, of:

a first function of said terminal of each one of said target enterprises minimally transmitting to said ASP server via said communication circuit said business information for his own enterprise, in response to a specific operation signal issued from said target enterprise;

a second function of said ASP server in response to said transmission of said business information, determining whether or not said target enterprise who sent his business information to said ASP, has a specific contract with said ASP, and when said contract has been confirmed, allowing said target enterprise to store said business information of said

target enterprise in one of specific areas of said storage means of said ASP, and which is allocated for said target enterprise;

a third function of said ASP server in response to said transmitting signals from said target enterprise, reiterating to perform said first function and said second function at an appropriate interval, so as to maintain said stored business information in said storage means of said ASP at all times in an updated condition with said latest business information with regard to each said target enterprise;

a fourth function of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said target enterprise to said ASP to review or download said his business information stored in said specific area allocated for him in said storage means provided in said ASP, determining whether or not said target enterprise who sent said access request signal to said ASP has a specific contract with said ASP, and when said contract has been confirmed, allowing said target enterprise to access to said specific area in said storage means of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said target enterprise can perform an operation for viewing or downloading from said ASP via its own terminal said business information with regard to its own enterprise;

a fifth function of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said accounting firm to said ASP to access the business information of a specific target enterprise stored in said specific area of said storage means provided in ASP and allocated to said target enterprise, determining whether or not said accounting firm who sent said access request signal to said ASP has the specific contracts with said ASP and said target enterprise, and when said contracts have been confirmed, allowing said accounting firm to access to said specific area in said storage means of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said accounting firm can perform an operation for viewing or downloading from said storage means of said ASP via its own terminal said business information with regard to said target enterprise and thereby said accounting firm can evaluate details of closing account of said target enterprise and issue an electronic signature certifying the accuracy and appropriateness of said details of closing account of said target enterprise;

a sixth function of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said accounting firm to said ASP to store said electronic signature certified closing account of said target enterprise in said storage means of said ASP, determining whether or not said accounting firm who sent said access request signal to said ASP has the specific contracts

with said ASP and said target enterprise, and when said contracts have been confirmed, allowing said accounting firm to access to said specific area in said storage means of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said electronic signature certified closing account of said target enterprise formed by said accounting firm is stored therein;

a seventh function of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said corporate rating business entity to said ASP to access to said business information of a target enterprise stored in said storage means of said ASP when said corporate rating business entity was requested from a target enterprise who desires to obtain a corporate rating thereof, determining whether or not said corporate rating business entity who sent said access request signal to said ASP has the specific contracts with said ASP and said target enterprise, and when said contracts have been confirmed, allowing said corporate rating business entity to access to said specific area in said storage means of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said corporate rating business entity can perform an operation for viewing or downloading from said ASP via its own terminal said business information with regard to said target enterprise and thereby said corporate rating for said target enterprise is completed using a corporate rating software in said corporate rating business entity; and

an eighth function of said terminal of said corporate rating business entity allowing said corporate rating for said target enterprise formed by corporate rating business entity to be disclosed to said target enterprise via said communication circuit.

23. (New) A corporate rating system according to claim 22, wherein said corporate rating business entity refers said electronic signature certified closing account issued for the target enterprise and stored in said storage means of said ASP in said seventh function.

24. (New) A corporate rating system according to claim 22, wherein said communication circuit is an Internet.

25. (New) A computer-implemented corporate rating method, wherein a communication terminal of a corporate rating business entity engaging in a business of performing corporate ratings having said communication terminal, a communication terminal of one or a plurality of target enterprises each having said communication terminal and each having a prescribed contractual relationship with said corporate rating business entity and

desiring a corporate rating of itself, a communication terminal of an accounting firm having said communication terminal and having a prescribed contractual relationship with said application service provider (ASP) and each one of said plurality of target enterprises, an ASP server of said ASP having a prescribed contractual relationship with said corporate rating business entity, each one of said target enterprises, and said accounting firm, are mutually electrically connected via an appropriate communication circuit,

wherein said ASP comprises storage means for storing business information indicating general business activities of each one of said target enterprises, including at least financial, accounting, and tax information for each one of said target enterprises, into one of a specific areas of said storage means provided in said ASP and allocated to each one of said target enterprises, separately,

and further wherein the method comprising the steps of:

a first step of said terminal of each one of said target enterprises minimally transmitting to said ASP via said communication circuit said business information for his own enterprise, in response to a specific operation signal issued from said target enterprise;

a second step of said ASP server in response to said transmission of said business information, determining whether or not said target enterprise who sent his business information to said ASP, has a specific contract with said ASP, and when said contract has been confirmed, allowing said target enterprise to store said business information of said target enterprise in one of specific areas of said storage means of said ASP, and which is allocated for said target enterprise;

a third step of said ASP server in response to said transmitting signals from said target enterprise, reiterating to perform said first step and said second step at an appropriate interval, so as to maintain said stored business information in said storage means of said ASP at all times in an updated condition with said latest business information with regard to each said target enterprise;

a fourth step of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said target enterprise to said ASP to review or download said his business information stored in said specific area allocated for him in said storage means provided in said ASP, determining whether or not said target enterprise who sent said access request signal to said ASP has a specific contract with said ASP, and when said contract has been confirmed, allowing said target enterprise to access to said specific area in said storage means of said ASP and which is

allocated for said target enterprise□ so that said target enterprise can perform an operation for viewing or downloading from said ASP via its own terminal said business information with regard to its own enterprise;

a fifth step of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said accounting firm to said ASP to access the business information of a specific target enterprise stored in said specific area of said storage means provided in ASP and allocated to said target enterprise, determining whether or not said accounting firm who sent said access request signal to said ASP has the specific contracts with said ASP and said target enterprise, and when said contracts have been confirmed, allowing said accounting firm to access to said specific area in said storage means of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said accounting firm can perform an operation for viewing or downloading from said storage means of said ASP via its own terminal said business information with regard to said target enterprise and thereby said accounting firm can evaluate details of closing account of said target enterprise and issue an electronic signature certifying the accuracy and appropriateness of said details of closing account of said target enterprise;

a sixth step of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said accounting firm to said ASP to store said electronic signature certified closing account of said target enterprise in said storage means of said ASP, determining whether or not said accounting firm who sent said access request signal to said ASP has the specific contracts with said ASP and said target enterprise, and when said contracts have been confirmed, allowing said accounting firm to access to said specific area in said storage means of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said electronic signature certified closing account of said target enterprise formed by said accounting firm is stored therein;

a seventh step of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said corporate rating business entity to said ASP to access to said business information of a target enterprise stored in said storage means of said ASP when said corporate rating business entity was requested from a target enterprise who desires to obtain a corporate rating thereof, determining whether or not said corporate rating business entity who sent said access request signal to said ASP has the specific contracts with said ASP and said target enterprise, and when said contracts have been confirmed, allowing said corporate rating business entity to access to said specific area in said storage means of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise, so that said corporate rating business entity can perform an operation for

viewing or downloading from said ASP via its own terminal said business information with regard to said target enterprise and thereby said corporate rating for said target enterprise is completed using a corporate rating software in said corporate rating business entity; and

an eighth step of said terminal of said corporate rating business entity allowing said corporate rating for said target enterprise formed by corporate rating business entity to be disclosed to said target enterprise via said communication circuit.

26. (New) A corporate rating method according to claim 25, wherein said corporate rating business entity refers said electronic signature certified closing account issued for the target enterprise and stored in said storage means of said ASP, in said seventh step.

27. (New) A corporate rating method according to claim 25, wherein said communication circuit.

28. (New) A computer-based corporate rating system, wherein a communication terminal of a corporate rating business entity engaging in a business of performing corporate ratings having said communication terminal, a communication terminal of one or a plurality of target enterprises each having said communication terminal and each having a prescribed contractual relationship with said corporate rating business entity and desiring a corporate rating of itself, a communication terminal of an accounting firm having said communication terminal and having a prescribed contractual relationship with an application service provider (ASP) and each one of said plurality of target enterprises, an ASP server of said ASP having a prescribed contractual relationship with said corporate rating business entity, said each one of said target enterprises, and said accounting firm, are mutually electrically connected via an appropriate communication circuit,

wherein said ASP comprises a storage unit configured to store business information indicating general business activities of each one of said target enterprises, including at least financial, accounting, and tax information for each one of said target enterprises, separately, into one of a specific areas of said storage unit provided in said ASP and allocated to each one of said target enterprises, separately,

and further wherein said system comprises functions, each being performed by a respective computer that executes computer-readable program code stored on computer-readable medium, of:

a first function of said terminal of each one of said target enterprises minimally transmitting to said ASP server via said communication circuit said business information for his own enterprise, in response to a specific operation signal issued from said target enterprise;

a second function of said ASP server in response to said transmission of said business information, determining whether or not said target enterprise who sent his business information to said ASP, has a specific contract with said ASP, and when said contract has been confirmed, allowing said target enterprise to store said business information of said target enterprise in one of specific areas of said storage unit in said ASP, and which is allocated for said target enterprise;

a third function of said ASP server in response to said transmitting signals from said target enterprise, reiterating to perform said first function and said second function at an appropriate interval, so as to maintain said stored business information in said storage unit in said ASP at all times in an updated condition with said latest business information with regard to each said target enterprise;

a fourth function of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said target enterprise to said ASP to review or download said his business information stored in said specific area allocated for him in said storage unit provided in said ASP, determining whether or not said target enterprise who sent said access request signal to said ASP has a specific contract with said ASP, and when said contract has been confirmed, allowing said target enterprise to access to said specific area in said storage unit of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said target enterprise can perform an operation for viewing or downloading from said ASP via its own terminal said business information with regard to its own enterprise;

a fifth function of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said accounting firm to said ASP to access the business information of a specific target enterprise stored in said specific area of said storage unit provided in ASP and allocated to said target enterprise, determining whether or not said accounting firm who sent said access request signal to said ASP has the specific contracts with said ASP and said target enterprise, and

when said contracts have been confirmed, allowing said accounting firm to access to said specific area in said storage unit of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said accounting firm can perform an operation for viewing or downloading from said storage unit of said ASP via its own terminal said business information with regard to said target enterprise and thereby said accounting firm can evaluate details of closing account of said target enterprise and issue an electronic signature certifying the accuracy and appropriateness of said details of closing account of said target enterprise;

a sixth function of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said accounting firm to said ASP to store said electronic signature certified closing account of said target enterprise in said storage unit in said ASP, determining whether or not said accounting firm who sent said access request signal to said ASP has the specific contracts with said ASP and said target enterprise, and when said contracts have been confirmed, allowing said accounting firm to access to said specific area in said storage unit of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said electronic signature certified closing account of said target enterprise formed by said accounting firm is stored therein;

a seventh function of said ASP server in response to an access request signal from said corporate rating business entity to said ASP to access to said business information of a target enterprise stored in said storage unit in said ASP when said corporate rating business entity was requested from a target enterprise who desires to obtain a corporate rating thereof, determining whether or not said corporate rating business entity who sent said access request signal to said ASP has the specific contracts with said ASP and said target enterprise, and when said contracts have been confirmed, allowing said corporate rating business entity to access to said specific area in said storage unit of said ASP and which is allocated for said target enterprise so that said corporate rating business entity can perform an operation for viewing or downloading from said ASP via its own terminal said business information with regard to said target enterprise and thereby said corporate rating for said target enterprise is completed using a corporate rating software in said corporate rating business entity; and

an eighth function of said terminal of said corporate rating business entity allowing said corporate rating for said target enterprise formed by corporate rating business entity to be disclosed to said target enterprise via said communication circuit.

29. (New) A corporate rating system according to claim 28, wherein said corporate rating business entity refers said electronic signature certified closing account

issued for the target enterprise and stored in said storage unit of said ASP in said seventh function.

30. (New) A corporate rating system according to claim 28, wherein said communication circuit is an Internet.